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ABSTRACT

This monograph focuses upon how teacher induction programs affect the professional maturation of the beginning teacher. In a discussion on the elements that make a good induction program, a checklist of eight program characteristics is presented. Four of these show the influence of other professions, and the remaining four apply directly to the needs of beginning teachers. The areas induction programs should cover are discussed. In considering how induction programs work, brief descriptions are presented of some of the most prevalent induction program components, e.g., internships, mentor teachers, induction committees, and orientation seminars. A bibliography is included. (JD)

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Teacher Induction Programs

During the past twenty years many schools have established teacher induction programs in an effort to initiate and retain high quality teachers (Galvez-Hjornevik 1985). These programs take many forms, the most recent borrowing from the induction techniques of nonteaching professions. Both new and old programs are organized into segments--introduction, instruction, assessment, and adjustment. As new induction techniques are initiated, more segments are integrated into existing programs. By breaking down existing programs into their functional parts, we can examine how these programs affect the professional maturation of the beginning teacher.

What Makes A Good Induction Program?

The intent of all induction programs is to transform a student teacher graduate into a competent career teacher. Schlechty (1985) suggests that signs of effective induction programs can be observed in the faculty and administration attitude and behavior: support of school norms and the general conformity of teacher performance to those norms. He presents a framework for evaluation of induction programs which can be translated into a checklist of eight program qualitites. His framework is intended to apply to induction programs of vastly

differing content and delivery structures. Four program characteristics show the influence of other professions:

1. The program explains to the inductees that the process of their selection is based on special requirements and that induction training is crucial to their future success.
2. The induction process is divided into progressive stages of achievement.
3. The program cultivates mutual support within peer groups.
4. The training is oriented toward long-term career goals.

The remaining characteristics apply directly to the needs of beginning teachers:

5. Administratively-set expectations and norms of teacher conduct are clearly articulated and disseminated.
6. Teachers must assimulate a professional vocabulary.
7. New teachers receive supervision, coaching, demonstration, and assessment.
8. The responsibility for supervision should be distributed throughout the faculty in a tightly organized, consistent, and continuous program.

Foster (1982) and Griffin (1985) emphasize the importance of specifying program objectives in behavioral terminology and the necessity for continuous feedback among program participants.

Griffin further cautions program developers on the inappropriate use of research results as definitions for expected teacher behavior. Program objectives should be concretely stated expectations of teacher behavior which reflect specific school standards.

Several references point out that induction programs should contain three information sources: the community, the school, and the teaching profession. All must be introduced to the beginning teacher, with emphasis on teaching as an area of life-long learning (Hall 1982). Special needs programs (e.g., those which introduce the new teacher into a rural or urban environment with which the teacher has had no previous experience) most often use this approach (Defino and Hoffman 1984).

What Areas Should Induction Programs Cover?

There is no shortage of proposals for program content (Griffin and Hukill 1983; Galvez-Hjornevik 1985; Zimpher 1985). Topics of importance are usually taken from surveys of senior teachers and administrators experienced in the evaluation of shortcomings of first-year teachers. To vastly varying degrees, all programs contain elements of faculty and facility introduction, classroom management, student discipline, professional conduct, school and school district expectations, and professional obligations. A new teacher needs to be exposed to a variety of teaching techniques and evaluation processes. Some programs equally instruct and assess the beginning teacher;

others emphasize assistance to the teacher rather than using the program as an indicator of the beginner's competency. Crucial problems arise when evaluation is mistaken for assessment and induction programs are used as wash-out programs. Schlechty (1985) emphasizes that new hirees in any field are hired with the expectation that they will "survive" the induction process and start on their way to full-term careers.

How Do Induction Programs Work?

The development and implementation of a wide variety of induction programs is well-documented, including descriptions of their delivery systems. Like the terms "induction" and "internship," many elements and intents of teacher induction programs are borrowed from other professions. Business and medicine are the most common (Galvez-Hjornevik 1985; Schlechty et al. 1984). Some are based on academic induction, such as formal seminars and informal workshops on the system and what is expected of the beginning teacher. Teacher induction started from the introductory lecture and, in some school systems, has evolved into sophisticated multipurpose programs. (For a summary of programs and references, see the ERIC DIGEST on Current Developments in Teacher Induction Programs.) The following are brief descriptions of some of the most prevalent induction program components.

Internship Status. Beginning teachers enter as teaching interns, often at reduced salary. The intern combines full teaching responsibility (albeit at reduced class loads) with

academic studies. These programs may lead to a masters degree, an advanced level of certification, a higher rung on a career ladder or a fully qualified teaching certificate after one to three years of program participation (Defino and Hoffman 1984).

The Mentor. Beginning teachers are assigned to a senior teacher in their area. The senior teacher supplies information, and oversees the maturation of the beginner's teaching and classroom management skills daily. Continuous helping contact between the beginner and the senior teacher (theoretically) provides the support and problem-solving resources for expedient teacher development. (For more bibliographic information, see ERIC DIGEST on Teacher Mentoring.)

The Committee. Beginning teachers are each assigned to an induction committee. The committee is a professional development team designed to supervise, provide information to and train the beginning teacher in school-approved classroom techniques and procedures. The committee usually consists of the school principal, a consultant on curriculum and instruction, and a peer teacher, the latter often as a mentor. The administrators are responsible for instruction, assessment, and evaluation; the peer teacher provides daily guidance and program continuity. Often the duties of the peer teacher include evaluation as well as helping the new teacher adjust to the professional environment (Defino and Hoffman 1984; Schlechty et al. 1984).

The Committee, Plus or Minus. In some programs the induction

committee serves not one inductee but many. In other programs the committee is supported by a separate group of trained evaluators, which removes the onus of evaluation from the committee/inductee relationship (California State Department of Education 1983; Galvez-Hjornevik 1985). Other forms of the committee include department-based team teaching and interdepartmental teacher coaching. These programs of teachers-helping-teachers are not restricted to benefit beginners but are also applicable to developing the skills of experienced teachers.

Orientation Seminars. The seminar is used to instruct inductees on subjects that the administration deems important, issues that peer teachers have found essential or helpful and concerns expressed by the participating inductees. It is almost never the sole component of an induction program. Seminars may be a support group for all program participants. More sophisticated programs address each group's concerns directly by providing separate seminars for inductees, peer teachers, school administrators and consultants. (Foster 1982; Galvez-Hjornevik 1985).

Experts' opinions of what ought to constitute an induction program are based on existing programs in nonteaching professions and proposed programs which address documented areas of beginning teachers' needs. Not all induction concerns of other professions transfer to the education profession. Not all proposed solutions will work. Future analysis of programs in existence will reveal what induction formats work and which need to be replaced with

other techniques.

The above components are hardly a complete listing of possible induction approaches, nor have all combinations of these formats been tried in existing programs. In spite of twenty years of professional concern with the initiation of new teachers into their working environments, much more work needs to be done in developing good programs and many schools have yet to implement any teacher induction program beyond the pre-Labor Day welcoming speech.

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